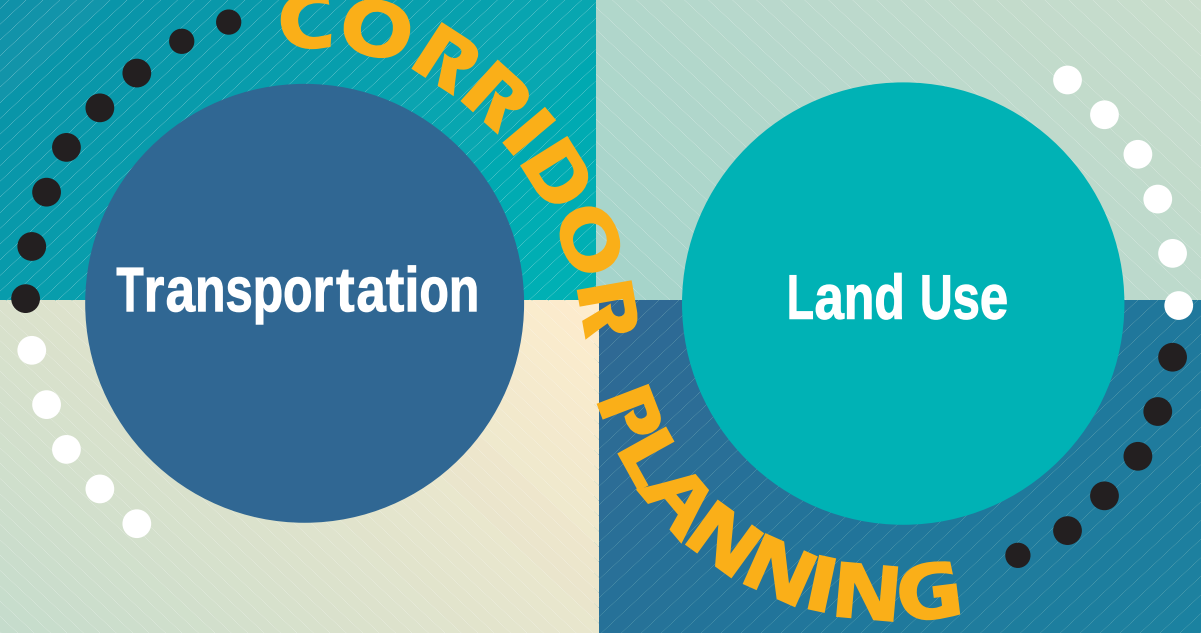
GUIDEBOOK



Idaho Transportation Department

Division of Transportation Planning

February 1998

IDAHO
CORRIDOR PLANNING
GUIDEBOOK

Approved by the
IDAHO TRANSPORTATION BOARD
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Prepared By
IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
PO BOX 7129
BOISE, ID 83707-1129

In Association With
CH2M HILL & OLSON PLANNING CONSULTING

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Contents

Introduction

Key Concepts

- *Corridor planning will assist prioritizing transportation projects and preserving public right of way.*
- *Corridor planning can comprehensively address future transportation needs and develop management strategies in the corridor area.*
- *Support for corridor planning includes Idaho's Local Land Use Planning Act. (Title 67, Chapter 65, Idaho Code); and, Powers and Duties of the Idaho Transportation Board (Sections 40-310 and 40-317, Idaho Code).*
- *The same key elements, tailored to the specific corridor, will be featured in all Idaho Corridor Plans.*
- *Corridor planning fosters cooperative state and local transportation planning efforts.*
- *All corridor planning activities require a clearly defined statement of purpose and need.*
- *Active public participation is an essential element of the corridor planning process.*
- *Multimodal transportation concepts will be considered.*

Guidebook Purpose

This guidebook is designed to assist Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) staff, in close cooperation with local governments, to develop plans for transportation corridors. The long-range planning process described in this guidebook is designed to integrate transportation planning with land-use planning, and to coordinate local and state transportation planning efforts. The corridor plans developed from this guidebook will follow a uniform format, while the focus of each plan will be tailored to the specific corridor.

Existing state highways will form the backbone of each corridor area. However, this does not rule out changes to existing alignments.

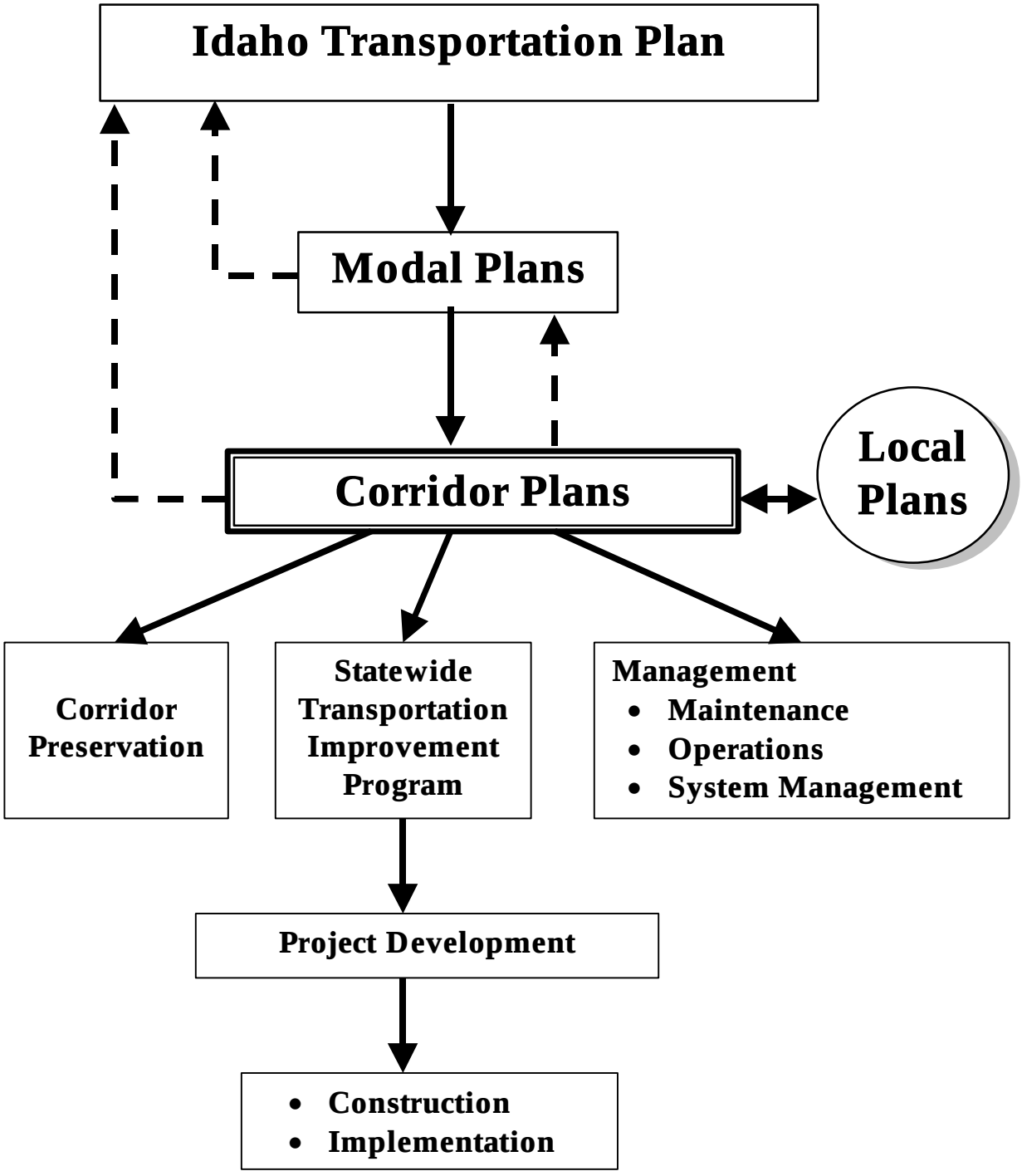
Although the guidebook is intended to be used for corridor planning by ITD and/or consultants under contract with state government, the guides should not be considered regulatory or mandated. It is assumed that the professionals using this guidebook will have some expertise in the field of urban or rural planning, or transportation planning. A glossary is included to assist all readers in understanding key concepts.

How to Use This Guidebook:

1. This *Introduction* and the description of the *Corridor Planning Process* provide information to understand corridor planning's big picture.
2. *Step 1 through Step 9* are step-by-step process explanations. Use the Guidelines provided with these steps as examples to get started.
3. *Appendix A* provides a tool box of public participation information to assist in finding the right mix of techniques. Public participation techniques should be tailored to each specific area.
4. *Appendices* B through F detail specific requirements and additional reference materials.

This guidebook outlines a preliminary step to the ITD project-development process. Corridor plans are designed to define the purpose and need and prepare projects for entry into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or other implementation strategies. (Idaho's corridor planning process is illustrated on the following page.)

How Corridor Planning Fits In



Ultimately, the Idaho Transportation Board will adopt the completed corridor plans, and it is hoped that the plan's recommendations will also be included or referenced in local comprehensive plans.

Definitions

The term "corridor" has a variety of applications. For this guidebook, the following terms are defined as follows:

Corridor is a broad geographic area, defined by logical, existing and forecasted travel patterns served by various modal transportation systems that provide important connections within and between regions of the state for people, goods, and services. Travel within the corridor may include vehicular, rail, transit, water, air, or non-motorized."

Corridor planning is a process that is collaborative with local governments and includes extensive public participation opportunities. A corridor may be divided into logical, manageable smaller areas for the purpose of corridor planning.

The process looks at the existing transportation system within the corridor and how the system could be changed to meet long-term needs. The process includes discussion of existing and projected travel patterns and social, environmental, and economic issues within the corridor. It includes discussion of infrastructure improvements in combination with wise land-use and system-management actions.

Corridor plan is a document that defines a comprehensive package of recommendations for managing and improving the transportation system (which, for this guidebook, includes transportation facilities and services) within and along a specific corridor, based upon a 20-year planning horizon. Recommendations may include any reasonable and effective mix of strategies and improvements for many modes.

The recommended mix of strategies and improvements contained in the corridor plan may be used to improve statewide, interregional, and regional mobility; reduce congestion; manage demand; preserve or maximize existing capacity; protect or improve levels of service; improve safety; or improve the intermodal transfer of people, goods, and services.

Corridor plans should address current and projected transportation needs and the land use, growth, economic development, and environmental issues related to transportation within the corridor.

The end product of the corridor plan will be a package of strategies and improvements that are designated to achieve the goals for the corridor.

Purpose and Need of Corridor Planning

What is the purpose of corridor planning? Corridor Planning accomplishes the following:

- Promotes the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and services.
- Initiates an intergovernmental cooperative planning process to promote community and state based transportation decisions.
- Provides opportunities for public, local government, and agency participation early and throughout the process, and allows them to actively participate in potential corridor solutions.
- Meets objectives by comprehensively addressing transportation issues, and evaluating a full range of multimodal solutions for increased mobility.
- Saves money by identifying long-range right-of-way needs by anticipating potential problems resulting from growth before solutions become too expensive.
- Fills the gap between the statewide modal plans for highways, public transportation,

rail, aeronautics, and bicycle/pedestrian, and the project selection process.

- Furnishes a link between land-use planning and transportation planning.
- Determines the extent of the social, economic, and environmental issues within the corridor and analyzes potential alternatives at an appropriate and economical level of detail.
- Facilitates resolution of major issues (i.e., public opinion, cost, environmental constraints) before specific project programming and development begin.
- Protects transportation investments by exploring alternate means to accommodate transportation needs, with and without capital-intensive improvements.
- Provides an opportunity to direct future development, and minimize environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Why Corridor Planning?

Corridor planning can prioritize which transportation projects need to proceed to the programming and development stage, and to explore economical alternatives to highway construction.

The purpose of corridor planning is to comprehensively address future transportation needs, and to recommend a package of improvements and management strategies for the transportation system within a corridor.

Because of a substantial increase in population and traffic volume in many areas of the state, local jurisdictions and the state are hard pressed to provide a transportation system that meets all needs. Local governments, highway districts, and ITD have had inadequate funding for transportation improvements that facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services within and through the state. The increase in the number of state and local transportation improvement projects requested each year has created a backlog.

Corridor planning can begin to address these problems by joint planning with local governments, prioritizing which transportation improvement projects should go on to the programming and development stage, and exploring economical alternatives to highway construction.

The ITD *Idaho Transportation Plan* along with modal plans support corridor planning by providing background information and needs identification throughout ITD's six jurisdictional districts. Corridor planning will partially implement the *Idaho Transportation Plan*. Goal 2 of the *Idaho Transportation Plan* (May, 1995) states: "Transportation plans and programs will integrate the intermodal transportation needs of the state." The corridor planning process will implement Goal 2 by considering multimodal needs in each corridor.

Goal 5 states: "Transportation decision-making process will provide opportunities for interagency cooperation, coordination, public involvement, and prioritizing public works and services." The corridor planning process will implement Goal 5 by including interagency cooperation and coordination, and public involvement throughout the process.

In January 1997, the Idaho Transportation Board adopted a resolution to initiate corridor planning, which is quoted in the sidebar on the next page.

ITD Board Resolution TB97-06:

- Whereas, the department wishes to continue corridor planning in the state.
- Whereas, corridor planning is a process for developing a long-range plan (20+ years) for managing and improving transportation facilities.
- Whereas, the department has a commitment to become true partners with local governments, agencies, and the public in identifying transportation problems and the most economic and efficient solutions to them.
- Whereas, there are several reasons to undertake corridor planning including protecting existing transportation investments, promoting community based planning efforts that address the desire of local government to become more involved in transportation decision making, and resolving major planning issues before project programming and development begin.
- Whereas, the ITD Board has already identified Idaho's principal arterial corridors as part of the draft Highway Modal Plan.
- Whereas, the corridor planning Initiative will be instrumental to local governments and the department in the implementation of the proposed Future Acquisitions Map legislation.
- Now, therefore be it resolved, that the Idaho Transportation Board authorizes staff to continue with statewide and district corridor planning efforts in close concert with statewide associations, agencies, local governments, and the public to initiate the corridor planning process.

Standard Components of Idaho's Corridor Plans

While the focus of each plan will vary depending upon local circumstances and issues, the components of each plan should be consistent. Consistency will assure that all Idaho plans cover the same key features.

Standard components that will be included in Idaho's corridor plans are:

- Executive summary, with description of the planning process, the goals, key points, and findings resulting from the planning process.
- Introduction, including the statement of purpose and need, the role of corridor planning in the state's transportation system, and the planning process used.
- Available financial resources and fiscal planning for corridor plan funding that indicates financial resources and money spent in the district and statewide.
- Overview of the existing conditions of the transportation system serving the corridor; and, an analysis on those conditions with regard to the performance objectives.
- Overview of the existing and projected future (20-year) environmental, land-use, and socio-economic conditions in the corridor area, including a community profile, current and planned land uses, historical and cultural buildings and sites, and key environmental resources and environmental issues.
- Analysis of expected future travel demand and performance of the existing and programmed transportation systems in 20 years.
- Summary of the public process and the criteria used to generate and screen alternatives into the feasible list and then the preferred list.
- Description of the alternatives, including generalized comparisons of costs, impacts, and the degree to which the alternative meets the goals.
- Description of the preferred package of recommendations.
-

- Implementation recommendations, for both long-range and interim improvements.

- Technical appendices, including summaries of the data gathered and information generated in Steps 1 through Step 8.

When developing implementation strategies, keep in mind that there is a need to preserve future right of way prior to development occurring. This can be accomplished through local and state cooperative efforts by the adoption of future acquisitions maps, per Section 67-6517, Idaho Code. Implementation can include eventual project listing in the statewide transportation improvement program, local transportation improvement programs, or through locally initiated efforts.

General Guidelines

With a state as diverse as Idaho in terms of its physical characteristics, population centers, and existing transportation patterns, the corridor planning conducted in the state will vary according to the proposed corridor location or amount of area development. So that the corridor plans will be consistent for the future development of transportation systems within workable corridors, general considerations are as follows:

1. The corridor plan must be based on a clearly defined and recognized need presented as the plan's purpose and need statement. It is especially critical that the local communities along the corridor have an active role in articulating what the purpose and need is, along with all the other project participants, and that consensus be reached regarding the statement's content.

2. Public participation opportunities throughout the corridor planning process will be available for brainstorming, receiving input, and decision-making assistance from stakeholders, citizens, local elected officials, appointed boards, impacted metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and/or regional planning agencies, and other interested parties. These groups will also assist in the selection of alternatives.

3. Corridor plans should be consistent with existing plans, documents, and laws. Consistency should be sought with local comprehensive and metropolitan plans adopted within the planning area, along with the *Idaho Transportation Plan*, modal plans, the Idaho Code, regional plans and state guidance documents, and federal laws, rules, policies, and guidance.

4. All travel modes should be addressed in the plans, including, but not limited to, highways, air, bicycle/ pedestrian, railroad, transit, and waterways, when applicable.

5. The corridor plans must have a long-range planning horizon, typically 20 years.

6. The standard components will be used in each plan. A corridor plan may develop an individual character, but the basic format shall be consistent among the different districts to facilitate uniform evaluation and comparison by ITD.

7. A corridor plan may cover a broad geographic area, and may be divided into manageable areas for planning purposes. What makes each area distinct is its local flavor; each concentrates on a particular location with different issues and problems.

8. Corridor plans must take into account existing comprehensive plans. This includes an assessment of consistencies and inconsistencies between the comprehensive and corridor plans, and consideration of the local plans' growth projections and other data sources. Efforts to achieve consistency between local and state projections should be undertaken.

   Correspondingly, local governments may choose to adopt corridor plans as part of their comprehensive plans' transportation elements.

9. Maps and/or tables illustrating the following should be included in each plan:

    - The corridor's location/boundaries
    - Corridor segments (if applicable)
    - Existing physical conditions
    - Adopted classifications and statistical data, including the following:
        - Functional classification of streets
        - Signalized intersections
        - Pavement condition
        - Number and type of lanes
        - Structural condition
        - Center lane information
        - Paved shoulder widths
        - Pathways and sidewalks
        - Crash locations by milepost or location
    - Average annual daily traffic
    - Freight data
    - Rail carriers
    - Forecasted traffic volumes for the planning horizon (usually 20 years)
    - Future highway lane requirements
    - Demographics

    Design concepts can be somewhat general (single-line sketches), dependent upon the corridor plan being developed.

10. Plans should be updated as conditions change, or at least every 5 years, to review the plan's status and make sure factors that may have emerged since the time of the last version are incorporated into the process.

The Corridor Planning Process for the state of Idaho was developed from these guidelines and is presented in the steps beginning on page 10.

Corridor Planning Process

Key Concepts

The corridor planning process involves a series of nine interrelated steps.

Corridor plan components will be uniform statewide to allow ease of application and communication for all entities involved.

The Planning Process

The planning process that has been developed for Idaho stems from a review and analysis of corridor planning processes implemented in other states, coupled with in-state, first-hand experience in conducting corridor studies or plans. This process recognizes the need for understanding both the public and technical aspects of corridor planning, and it encourages an ongoing dialogue among professional staff, stakeholders, and citizens at large.

The planning process has been organized to accommodate multiple (and possibly conflicting) constituencies and needs. It accomplishes this by making all corridor planning participants go through a process that leads to:

- Understanding transportation needs
- Evaluating a wide range of solutions
- Assuring knowledge-based selection of improvements
- Balancing the needs of multiple constituencies

These items are accomplished through a series of steps and tasks.

Steps, Tasks, and Interrelationships

To adequately and uniformly address each corridor plan component (defined in Steps 1 through 9), certain standardized tasks should be performed. Existing data should be used to the extent possible to accomplish the various tasks, recognizing that in some cases new data may need to be acquired.

These tasks have been grouped into nine broad steps that lead to the completion of a corridor plan. Note that public participation is anticipated to be part of the corridor planning process throughout much of the plan's development, as illustrated in the graph in Step 1. The steps guide corridor planners to:

1. Develop a corridor work plan and public participation plan.
2. Research existing conditions of the transportation system.
3. Document existing and projected environmental and land use conditions in the corridor area.
4. Analyze the projected future (20-year) travel demand and performance in the corridor.
5. Establish purpose and need, and the relative importance of corridor needs through project goals.
6. Generate alternatives to meet the corridor goals.
7. Identify feasible alternatives by first evaluating all alternatives.
8. Use comparative analysis to further evaluate alternatives and generate a preferred list.
9. Review material gathered from the previous steps and assemble components into the corridor plan document.

Each step contains the purpose for the activity, the tasks necessary to accomplish the step, and expected products.

Planning Schedule

Factors impacting the planning schedule focus on the complexity of the corridor itself. To

determine corridor complexity, consider the following:

- What are the existing, and future, zoning and land uses, and the potential for development?
- Is the corridor located in an urban, suburban, or rural area, or combination thereof?
- How many alternatives are available as viable options?
- Is sufficient existing data available, or is it necessary to acquire updated or new data?
- Is there public interest (for or against)?

In short, each plan's schedule needs to be locally developed. The main point is to keep the process **moving** in a timely manner so that local communities and ITD gain the benefits of having jointly prepared (and approved) transportation corridor plans.

Not all corridor plans will take the same length of time to complete. A straightforward and non-controversial plan may average 18 months from start to finish. Adding several travel modes, public interest, and/or high levels of area development to the equation could lead to a longer time frame. Factors such as the availability of existing models or data also impact the schedule.

Consider the corridor's size and location when developing the project time line, and recognize that its complexity will directly impact the time needed to complete the plan.

Step 1—Develop a Corridor Work Plan

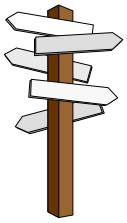
Key Activities

- *Identify key decision points*
- *Establish the corridor's boundary*
- *Create a public participation work plan*
- *Meet with local officials and stakeholders*
- *Inventory financial resources*

Purpose (Why)

The tasks to be accomplished under this step establish the framework for the development of the corridor plan. The corridor work plan establishes the key decision points, letting all participants know how and when they can provide input into the plan's development and where the decision-making authority resides. The corridor boundary gives a physical structure to the plan. Finally, preparation of the public participation plan assures that a proactive, collaborative planning process will be implemented.

Activity (What) and Approach (How)



The steps identified in this guidebook flow one into the other, all leading to the completion of a corridor plan. A number of the steps (primarily Steps 5 through 8) contain key decision points, at which time public and technical groups should come together to arrive at a consensus on the plan's continued direction.

Task One: Identify Key Decision Points in Plan Development

Key decision points include establishing a statement of purpose and need, and listing the goals for the corridor; generating alternatives to meet the goals; identifying feasible alternatives; and prioritizing the preferred alternative(s).

After reviewing all the steps found in this guidebook and the "Corridor Work Plan and Public Participation Points" (Exhibit 1-1 on page 11), tailor the timelines and participation points to the corridor under consideration to estimate the length of time needed to accomplish the steps (use monthly increments). Identify the approximate time span when meetings will be held with officials, agencies, stakeholders, and the general public.

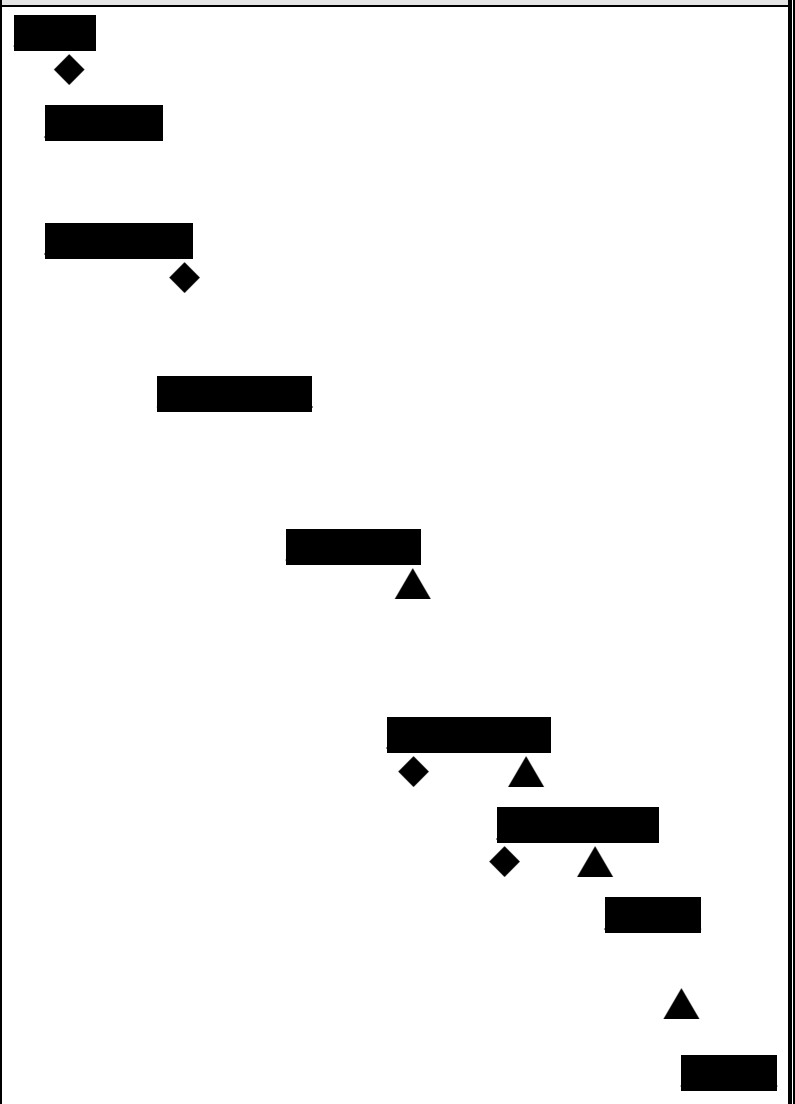
Task Two: Establish the Corridor's Boundary

Use the "corridor" definition on page 3 and local knowledge to propose a logical boundary for the corridor. Draw the boundary on a base map along with key features of the transportation system and the areas that need changes to the system. Use the area within the corridor boundary as the focus for subsequent data gathering and analysis.

Corridor boundary guidelines: The length or section boundaries of a corridor depend on many things, including the roadway function, departmental and governmental boundaries, and political forces.

Exhibit 1-1

CORRIDOR WORK PLAN & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POINTS

STEPS		PROJECT DURATION
1	Develop a Corridor Work Plan	
2	Research Existing Conditions of the Transportation System	
3	Document Existing and Projected Environmental and Land Use Conditions	
4	Analyze Future (20 year) Travel Demand and Performance in the Corridor	
5	Review the Corridor Boundary, Develop a Statement of Purpose and Need, and Identify Goals for the Corridor	
6	Generate Alternatives to Meet Goals	
7	Identify Feasible Alternatives	
8	Analyze Feasible Alternatives to Generate Preferred Alternative(s)	
9	Prepare the Corridor Plan Document	

◆ **Officials, Agencies, and Stakeholder Participation**

▲ **General Public Participation/Key Decision Points**

The corridor should have some level of functional continuity from one end to the other and may involve a corridor that is hundreds of miles long, following existing state highways from border to border.

A long corridor may be divided into corridor study areas, design study segments, and ultimately improvement projects. Each area boundary should provide a logical framework for the orderly development of the next level of study and planning, allowing individual parts to be developed in the context of a unified whole.

Corridor boundaries should:

- Match the functional use of the corridor, reflecting patterns of movement between activity centers or major route junctions.
- "Bracket" bottlenecks. Corridor boundaries should be selected so that effective solutions can be found to improve the transportation system up to, through, and beyond problem areas. Don't stop the corridor in the middle of a problem area with the assumption that the remainder can be studied in a subsequent effort. This places constraints on the final solution. When a "bottleneck" is located at a "change of use" such as a destination city (often with a junction to another major route), address the corridor issues and include decisions whether to make improvements through the urban area on the existing alignment, the need for a bypass, and improving connections to other major routes. Include as much of the other major routes as necessary to study appropriate connections.
- Consider the effects of physical or environmental constraints extending past the constraint. This will assure that decisions made in one section will not set up the next section for severe consequences. As the focus moves farther into the planning process, projects must "have independent utility or independent significance, i.e., be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made. The project should not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements" (23 CFR, 771.111).

Corridor width should not be a set width. The width of the corridor is more an outcome than an initial parameter. Consider a corridor as a linear transportation service facility or service area that:

- Contributes to traffic volume which may be several counties wide. The width may only be indirectly related to the focus of the corridor plan.
- In an urban area, may focus on a single roadway. However, the corridor may include parallel facilities which may be located 0.5 or 1 mile on either side (generally, parallel facilities have a lower functional class). Otherwise, the study becomes an area-wide study, with a network of roadways rather than a corridor.
- In rural areas, may vary from improvements within the existing right of way to evaluation of bypass routes which may stray several miles from the existing roadway.
- Is strongly influenced by the type of facility or amount of access being contemplated. Widening of an existing roadway with limited access points can be done within a fairly narrow band. If little or no access will be allowed it is often necessary to widen the corridor to allow consideration of a new alignment of the existing roadway to maintain existing access needs.

Task Three: Create a Public Participation Work Plan

Make sure the appropriate public participation methods are matched with the various stages of the corridor plan's development. Public participation can include identifying the project need, establishing the corridor size, determining community characteristics, gaining consensus about future forecasting results, and concurring with implementation strategies. Again, for public participation to truly be collaborative, there must be ample opportunities for meaningful involvement throughout the planning process.

The public participation budget is also critical and can vary greatly because of the size and complexity of the corridor. Sufficient funds to implement the public participation activities are mandatory. Short-changing the budget will result in short-changing the process necessary to achieve collaborative planning.

To keep the participation process focused and relatively easy for project managers to track, use a single document as a work plan that all people involved with the corridor planning effort can reference. A sample outline for a public participation work plan is shown below.

Public Participation Work Plan Outline

I. Corridor Plan Background

   A. Definition of the overall corridor framework — general location, problems.

II. Corridor Issues, Participants, Community Framework

   A. Preliminary identification of critical issues and problems in need of resolution.

   B. Identification of community leaders, elected officials, and key community groups.

   C. Identification of planned community events in the corridor that are scheduled during the work plan.

III. Tools and Schedule

   A. Description of participation methods, objectives, and where each fits into the plan's schedule.

   B. Budget, hours, and time allocated to each tool.

IV. Staffing

   A. Hourly requirements, staff member identified.

V. Lists

   A. Stakeholders.

   B. Media contacts.

   C. Elected officials.

When creating the public participation work plan, make the development of the list of stakeholders a top priority. Accomplish this task by talking to key decision makers within the corridor planning area (local elected officials, agency representatives, ITD District staff, community leaders). Then compile the list. Depending upon the number of stakeholders that are identified, it may be more appropriate to create several subcategories of stakeholders, such as elected officials, agency representatives, and associations.

See Appendix A and Appendix C for additional information regarding public participation and budget guidelines. Also, ITD's Public Involvement Coordinator at the Office of Public Affairs is available to assist with public participation techniques.

Task Four: Meet with Local Elected Officials and Stakeholders

Hold small group meetings with local government officials and other stakeholders to obtain their input on the corridor boundary, potential alternatives, and opinions about current and future needs within the corridor. Also identify the major issues they may have with the area transportation system.

Task Five: Inventory Financial Resources

Determine:

- How much funding is available for developing corridor plans in each ITD District,
- How much has been previously spent in each ITD District and statewide, and
- The likelihood of future financial resources for corridor plan development.

Expected Products (Results)

- Base map(s) illustrating the corridor boundary.
- Corridor work plan documenting key decision points.
- Public participation work plan with list of stakeholders.
- List of transportation-related issues raised by local elected officials and stakeholders.
- Inventory of financial resources.

Step 1 Guidelines

The goal of Step 1 is to **get started**. Developing a corridor work plan seems like an overwhelming task, but it is absolutely necessary to keep the corridor planning process moving. Use the checklist below to lay a foundation for developing the corridor plan.

Task One: Identify Key Decision Points in Plan Development

- ❑ Identify milestones in corridor planning, based on the steps in this book.
- ❑ Develop a work plan *(see Exhibit 1-1 on page 11*) to tie development of the corridor plan to a timeline.

Task Two: Establish the Corridor's Boundary

- ❑ Propose a logical boundary for the corridor.
- ❑ If applicable, divide the corridor into study areas.
- ❑ Define corridor limits around functional uses, bottlenecks, and physical constraints.
- ❑ Define corridor width based on the service area and the type of facilities under consideration.
- ❑ Create a map of the corridor.

Task Three: Create a Public Participation Plan

- ❑ Develop a list of stakeholders — this is a top priority.
- ❑ Select participation methods that are consistent with the phases of the corridor plan. *Remember: the key to collaborative public participation is meaningful involvement. See Appendix A for public participation guidelines.*
- ❑ Define a budget for the public participation process.
  See Appendix C for assistance in budget planning.

Task Four: Meet with Local Elected Officials and Stakeholders

- ❑ Hold a collaborative meeting with local officials and stakeholders to gather their impressions of the corridor boundary.
- ❑ Identify the major issues from the officials and stakeholders.

Task Five: Inventory Financial Resources

- ❑ Determine available funding.
- ❑ Estimate future financial resources.